

MAY 1984 - #

THE CONCERT
OF EUROPE

---FROM THE EDITOR-----

Rather than procrastinating for six or more years, as I usually do in matters involving time and effort, I've decided to jump to it and begin "publishing" a Diplomacy 'zine. (Just what the hobby needs!) I admit that you could easily foliate a large desert with the trees that have been spent on Diplomacy 'zines over the last decade or so. However, trees have given their lives for less meaningful things (like, any of my recent term papers) and no one has bemoaned the loss. Anyway, to trim a long tale, I'm semi-proudly introducing The Concert of Europe, despite probable market saturation. If other hobbyists can throw time and money into allowing total strangers to have fun playing their favorite game without them, why can't I?

Enough justification, on to the format of the 'zine. The title, for those of you who haven't taken European History 101, is derived from Matternich's 19th century system of maintaining the balance of power in Europe (a chapter in history that all Diplomacy players could take a lesson from.) It is the collapse of the concert system that made the game Diplomacy possible historically. The 'zine's name has further implications. The first, that the 'zine is devoted to European politics--no duh! The second implication lies in the word 'concert'. As a music student at Eugene's fine institution of lower education, the University of Oregon, I am very much interested in the arts--music, cinema, literature, treachery, et cetera. Hence, I intend to devote a certain amount of this 'zine to reviews of movies, books, games, you name it. After all, what's the point of publishing a 'zine if you can't spout your opinions in it?. And considering that I have no opinions (or keep them safely to myself) on such things as politics and religion, what else can I do but rant about art? Readers are overwhelmingly encouraged to send in reviews, previews, and rebuttles to reviews. Anything printed is worth a free copy, and my eternal thanks.

I realize that critics are to humankind what ticks are to animalkind but nothing, in my opinion, is more fun than reading the opinions of someone who I violently disagree with. Well one thing is more fun (no, sadly it's not a good stab--like sex and drugs I don't do stabs anymore--"honest") it's reading the opinions of two people who violently disagree with one another. Therefore, controversial, even slanderous, rebuttles are more than welcome. Articles and letters dealing directly with the hobby, however, will take precedent. I have to keep in mind that this is a Diplomacy 'zine not a review 'zine.

Enough on that, on to the description of how the 'zine will work. I don't know about you, but I'm poor. The last things I need are 'zines that cost enough to break even. In my poverty I have sought out inexpensive 'zines to sub to. In deference to those brave publishers who take a loss on every issue I will happily do the same. For starters The Concert of Europe will run for fifty cents an issue with a one-dollar game fee. (If I don't lose enough money in the first year the price will adjust downward.) The 'zine will be published at the leisurely rate of once a month. This leisurely rate will be maintained at all costs. Mark me, if I miss a month I'll place Austria at the top of all my preference lists, and that's a promise--GULP!

Well, before I ware out the capital i key on this typewriter it's time to call this first letter from the editor quits.

Michael Lee

--GAME NEWS-----

The scope of my knowledge of what's going on in the hobby is limited at best. So please everyone, if you hear of anything worthwhile let me know--especially concerning tournaments, new pulications, and cons.

LEPRECON: Calamity Joan Extrom's St. Patrick's Day con was small but festive. Other 'zines have carried play by play accounts but I'd just like to take this time to thank Joan personally for a grand weekend and to plug the event for next year. If you can find Philomath

you can certainly find Wren so there's no excuse for missing out next year. Speaking of next year I wonder if it will take me until Saturday night again before I'll manage to befriend the trio of dogs? Anyway, Thanks again Joan and I'll see you again in March unless you are planning a visit to Eugene in which case let me know and I'll arrange an evening of D and D. (Dinner and Diplomacy that is!)

Well that's all the news I can muster. A tad skimpy, no?

--THE GAMES-----

It's only issue #1 and already a game is nearly ready, however, because of the fledgling nature of The Concert of Europe no game is underway yet, I can't wait to show off my little maps of Europe. At this point we have eight subbers who want in on games, however, because four of you live within a stones throw, let's wait until June and issue #2 so that a non-homogeneous game or two can get under way. If a few more players don't appear I'll start a hidden identity quasi-gun boat game; no private negotiation--strictly open press negotiation.

Since there's no game under way, I'll use this space to offer a few house rules. 1) Turns will be combined as follows; Spring will be combined with Winter and Autumn, Fall will be combined with Summer. 2) Turns will break into individual seasons at the request of two players or when I deem it absolutely imperative. 3) A phone call or a SASE will get you an advance list of builds, removals, and retreats as they stand to date. 4) Once orders have been received they can not be changed. 5) Unordered retreats will retreat OTB. 6) Unordered builds will not appear. 7) unordered removals will be taken from the first space in alphabetical order. 8) Draws may include any combination of surviving players, but require unanimous support. On this issue "Qui tacet consentire" will be enforced.

Silence gives consent. So if you are opposed say so or forever hold your peace.

As a final note on games, I have plenty of openings with two half full games to date. After this month's big (and expensive) push for new subscribers hopefully one or both will be full in June. To those of you who are already waiting to enter a game and are angry that this issue didn't start one despite adequate numbers, please be patient you're getting issue #1 free. Now for the section that I have been waiting for, the reviews.

--REVIEWS, PREVIEWS, REBUTTALS-----

Bart Aikens, long time Diplomacy player, film maker, and comrade opens this issue's review section with two reviews on recent films, and in the process earns a free issue. (Fortunately, on his subscription I save the twenty cents that would have gone for the stamp.)

ROMANCING THE STONE:

Director Bob Zemeckis is a protege of Steven Spielberg. As such, it is not odd that he would follow in his mentor's "Raiders of the Lost Ark" tradition by making "Romancing the Stone." Zemeckis, however, appears to have learned that turning out pallid imitations of blockbusters isn't spiritually satisfying for an aspiring filmmaker, so instead he has made an "original" and highly entertaining oldtime adventure-style picture.

Plotwise "Romancing the Stone" is episodic television: a woman recruits a bold adventurer to help her deliver ransom in exchange for the release of her sister. The woman and the adventurer find themselves in love with each other amidst an exotic Colombian jungle locale. They thwart the kidnappers and escape. But Zemeckis makes "Romancing the Stone" a fresh exercise by casting rising star Kathleen Turner as a romance novelist who proves to be neither a damsel in distress nor a thrill-seeking tomboy, but a three-dimensional modern American woman. Michael Douglas, who produced the film, co-stars

as the adventurer who supposedly will stop at nothing to earn enough money to buy a boat and sail away to a private paradise. If the movie has a flaw it is Douglas' character--he is entirely too nice to cause Turner to worry that he might run off with the precious stone that she needs to secure the freeing of her sister.

Fast-paced, humorous, virtually plausible, and exciting, "Romancing the Stone" may slightly disappoint "Raiders" fans expecting exploits on a breathtaking scale; there are no Nazis incinerated by divine power or huge boulders trailing at the protagonists' heels. "Romancing the Stone" is disarmingly simple and charming, not at all a specific homage to the old serials but instead proof that films following in a major money-maker's footsteps don't have to be ripoffs.

-Bart Aikens

(One yes vote for "Romancing the Stone". Any Siskels or Eberts out there who'd like to respond?)

THE BOUNTY:

William Bligh (1754-1817) is remembered for his maltreatment of the S.S. Bounty crew which prompted first mate Fletcher Christian to cast the infamous captain and eighteen of his followers out to sea in a small boat in a 1789 mutiny. In "The Bounty", based upon Richard Hough's book "Captain Bligh and Mr. Christian," Anthony Hopkins essays the role of the outwardly ruthless but inwardly noble British naval officer, successfully humanizing but not apologizing for his subject. Mel Gibson, whose matinee idol status won him top billing over his infinitely more accomplished co-star, is a photogenic albeit somewhat wooden Fletcher Christian whose performance lacks a convincing motivation for his betrayal of his friend Bligh.

"The Bounty" has its detracting features. "Chariots of Fire" composer Vangelis apparently skipped the preliminary screening of the film and wrote the music in isolation, unaware of the mood he was supposed to reflect. Director Roger Donaldson fails to exploit

his exquisite footage of the Bounty on golden horizons and the grandeur of the sea; he always cuts too swiftly to the next scene. Moreover, we don't detect enough animosity toward Bligh slowly mounting among the men, the result of this being a mutiny that seems to have been conceived at the last moment.

Nonetheless, "The Bounty" is forceful, epic in its scope and boasts impressive production values. Scenarist Robert Bolt thoughtfully explores the facets of Bligh's puritanical nature which make him a well-intentioned though unrealistic and inflexible commander of men, taking screen treatment of the Bounty saga a step further.

(Note: Bligh seems to have been unable to stay away from the excitement of uprisings: while governor of New South Wales he was imprisoned by army mutineers during the Rum Rebellion of 1808.)

-Bart Aikens

In the June issue perhaps Bart will have seen the new Raiders film, or perhaps Dune--both of which are slated for release this month--and will grace the pages of The Concert of Europe with more current film reviews. Time will tell. Any way, all readers are strongly encouraged to submit their reactions to any event or thing that is accessible to readers across the country. I can't stress this enough.

As Bart has for the most part covered the world of film for this issue I'll turn my attention to a recent game release.

CAMPAIGN TRAIL:

In this election year I can think of no better game to recommend over Campaign Trail, GDW's new "adventure" game. As the title suggests the game represents a presidential election and like Parker

Brothers' election game "Landslide" before it "Campaign Trail" is as abstract a simulation as there is on the market.

The play goes roughly as follows: you and your vice-presidential candidate (both represented as fluorescent pawns) move about the board which is a large map of the United States. The map is clearly divided into states and is covered by dots. Each dot is colored either red, white, or blue, the colors signifying the population of the city that the dot represents. The dots are linked by trails that represent major interstate highways. Players roll dice and move their pawns along the trails receiving popular votes in the states where they land in accordance with the size of the city they are in. The larger the city they visit the more votes they receive in that state. This continues until a pre-set time limit expires at which time players determine who has won the electoral vote of each state based on who has the most popular votes in that state. A good game can take between 90 minutes and three hours.

This may sound simplistic (it is) but the game becomes highly strategic as the time limit nears. Jockeying for position in each state that you've earmarked for your own is a tense business. Nothing is more aggravating than wasting half the game battling for New York only to watch your candidate fall hopelessly behind everywhere else. For all your work you've profitted nothing.

The game is fast paced and contains just enough luck and random occurrences to keep things from ever becoming tedious. However, it has one flaw--a total lack of simulation authenticity. As a Diplomacy lover authenticity has never been mandatory, but wouldn't it be wild to play an election game in which taking stands on issues, raising money, and advertising were intergrel parts of each player's

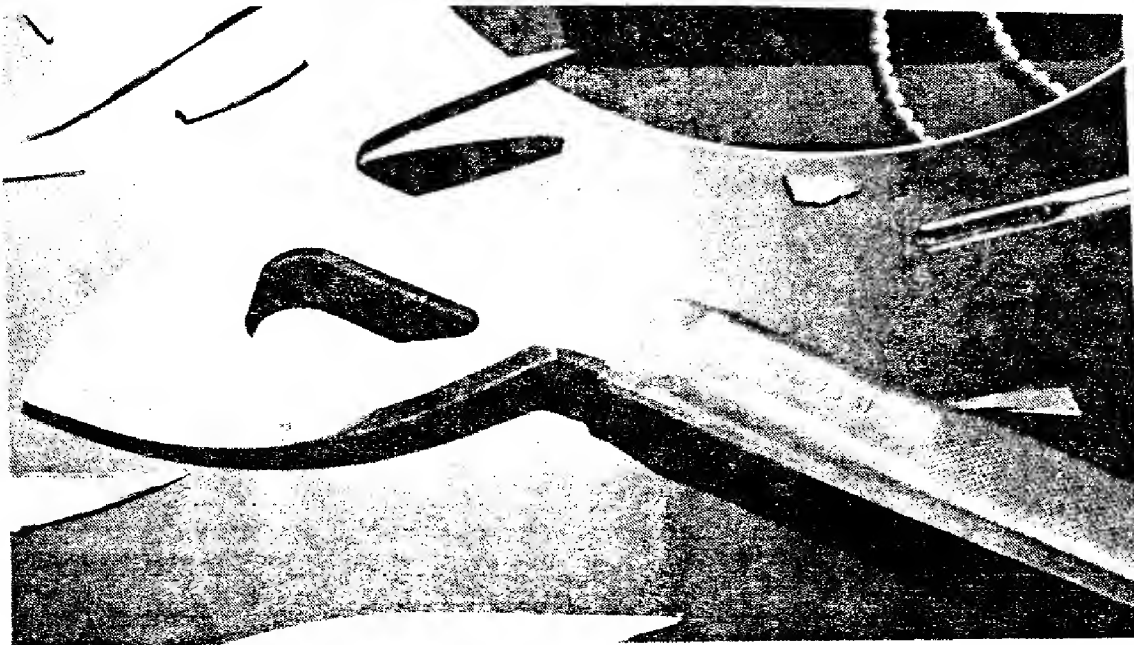
strategy for winning? Oh well, I suppose the saying still rings true, "Accurate games can't be fun and fun games can't be accurate."

I've only owned Campaign Trail a short while, however, based on several long games I have a feeling that it will win a solid niche among the games that I play regularly.

Campaign Trail retails for 15 dollars and makes an excellent replacement for the now out-of-print classic, Landslide.

-The Editor

Well, that brings to a close this first ever review section. I hope that you find these opinions or suggestions helpful.



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--LITERARY CONTEST-----

When space allows, The Concert of Europe will run a series of literary contests. Winning material will of course be printed. Here goes...

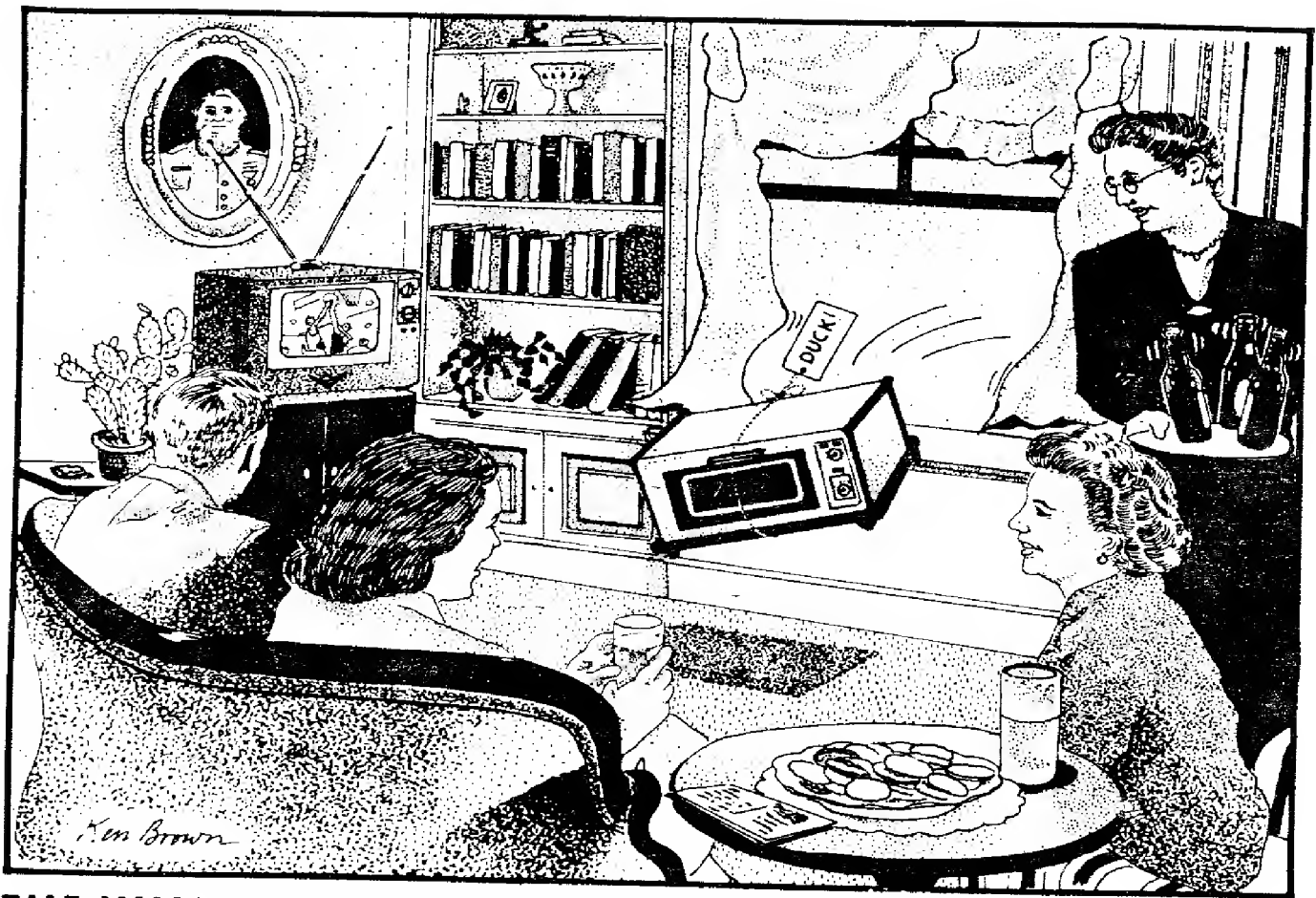
This month a little television nostalgia is in order. Please submit brief scripts to an imaginary episode of everyones favorite product of the sixties..."GILLIGAN'S ISLAND". However, there's a twist. Write your script as if you were some major playwright, author, or filmmaker. Entries will be judged on how well they mimick the writer chosen, how true they are to the beloved Gilligan mythos, and of course on humorous content.

I look foreward to hearing from you. I can't wait to read a script in which Skipper's little buddy spouts Bergmanesque metaphysics or in which Mr. and Mrs. Howell exchange powerful but terse quips a la Pinter.

Good luck, and by all means send in an entry.

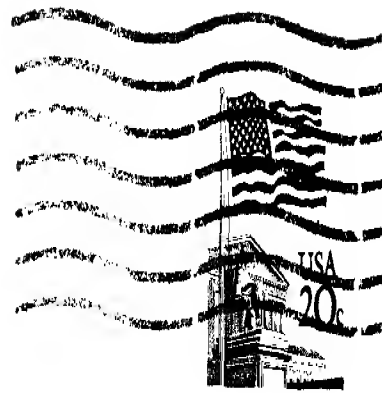
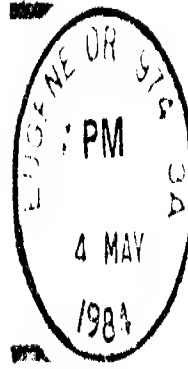
---FINAL WORDS-----

It is with no small pride that I announce that this issue of The Concert of Europe, and hopefully all issues, was produced entirely without the aid of a computer. It's not that I hate computers, it's just that I don't trust machines that make me all but obsolete. Where will it stop?



THE WINDOW OF VULNERABILITY

THE CONCERT OF EUROPE
MICHAEL LEE
3480 DANNA CT.
EUGENE, OR
97405



ROD WALKER
1273 CREST DR.
ENCINITAS, CA
92024

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